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CREATIVE MACHINE Embroidery

INSPIRATION & TECHNIQUES FOR DIGITIZED DESIGNS

ADORABLE CANDY CUTIES

made entirely
in the hoop p.18

EMBELLISH
A COMFY
SWEATSHIRT
WITH BIG,
BOLD
FLORALS

p.22

NEW!
SPOOKY TREATS
DESIGN
COLLECTION AT
shopsewitall.com

GREET TRICK-OR-TREATERS
WITH A FESTIVE BASKET
+ free design p.28



SEPTEMBER/
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CREATIVE MACHINE Embroidery

VOLUME 14 • ISSUE 5

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a note from the editor

DEAR READERS,

I love this time of year. Fall is so pretty here in Colorado as the aspens turn their signature chartreuse and the weather is mild, allowing us to breathe and relax before the onslaught of winter. It's the perfect time to snuggle in a cozy sweatshirt, such as the one featured on page 22.

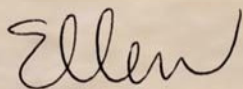
It's really challenging to embroider a large-scale design combination, and most people shy away from it. Let's face it: If you don't plan the exact placement of each design and execute it perfectly, the whole garment is ruined. So the process is pretty nerve-wracking! Well, turn to "Floral Flair" to learn from Katrina Walker, a true embroidery guru who knows her stuff. Katrina walks you through the process and showcases different sweatshirt weights with different design densities to ensure you get the desired result. And not only will you be comfy in this new sweatshirt, you'll be glamorous, too!

As we transition into fall, we also anticipate the coming of Halloween, which many of you know is my favorite holiday! We're preparing you for Halloween with a few great projects to make for kids of all ages (including yourself). First up is a cute in-the-hoop treat holder shaped like a bat, featured on the cover. This little guy makes a great party favor or gift for school friends, coworkers or teachers. All you need is a little felt and minimal thread to whip up tons of these in no time. See page 18 for the how-tos.

Another great gift idea is the "Little Monsters" featured on page 42. These adorable Halloween creatures are actually puzzles created entirely in the hoop. Once the design is finished, simply cut between the puzzle piece stitching lines for an instant game while the kids wait to go trick-or-treating. Get the Pumpkin Puzzle for free today! And to make things sweeter, we're offering an exclusive Bones Alphabet collection at shopsewitall.com that you can use to personalize a bag to hold all the pieces between uses.

We're also bringing you a great kit with this issue. Our "Sweet Treat Basket" kit comes with all the fabric you need and the entire Spooky Treat embroidery design collection, debuting on page 28. No need to go all out and hang spider webs, burn candles and play scary music on Oct. 31 (unless that's your cup of tea, of course!). This basket is all you need to add a little Halloween décor to your home.

I hope you enjoy this issue, and Happy Halloween!



Ellen March

coming attractions

Ho-ho-holiday décor and more is coming up in the Nov/Dec issue of *Creative Machine Embroidery*! Plus, we've got great last-minute gift ideas, including cute in-the-hoop stocking stuffers and a cozy robe featuring an exclusive design download. Find the issue on newsstands Oct. 20, 2015.



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contributors



Learn More

about the experts and designers featured in this issue at cmemag.com.

lisa archer



("In the Hoop: Candy Cutie"—page 18) is the owner and creative director of Pickle Pie Designs. She loves the challenge of creating in-the-hoop designs that reflect her personal style.

Home Base: Holly Springs, NC
Visit: picklepiedesigns.com

ramona baird



("Unique Technique: Welt Pockets ITH"—page 46) is Education Director for the American Sewing Guild. She has over 15 years of both commercial and home embroidery experience.

Home Base: Southwestern WI

pamela cox



("Q&A with Pamela Cox"—page 58) received a fashion design degree from The Boston School of Design with an emphasis on patternmaking. Purchasing her first embroidery machine in '07 added a new dimension to her education.

Home Base: Dublin, NH

martina gibboney



("Animal Instinct"—page 32) learned how to sew and hand embroider at age 5. In 1995, she was named one of Atlanta's top 3 Romantic Designers in *Atlanta Magazine*. She strives to inspire, encourage and share her knowledge with others.

Home Base: Conyers, GA
Visit: technats.com

kay hickman



("Basic Training: Down to Business"—page 14) is a Bernina of America educator and teaches seminars and classes throughout the U.S.

Home Base: Edmond, OK
Visit: berninausa.com

pattie otto



("Beyond Basic Buttonholes"—page 50) is the owner of Great Copy Patterns. She enjoys creating new and unique patterns, teaching sewing classes, writing books and articles for publication and designing machine embroidery.

Home Base: Racine, WI
Visit: greatcopy.com

cheryl stranges



("Endless Embellishments"—page 54) is a sewing educator for Husqvarna Viking, Pfaff and Singer specializing in sergers, embroidery software, sewing notions and presser feet.

Home Base: Ontario, Canada
Visit: seecherylsew.blogspot.com

krista tracy



("Little Monsters"—page 42) discovered her passion by designing and sewing custom clothing and then found machine embroidery. Krista enjoys sharing her love of crafting through

her website and the embroidery designs that she creates.

Home Base: Montgomery, LA
Visit: littleairplanedesigns.com

katrina walker



("Floral Flair"—page 22) specializes in working with silk and wool. She enjoys designing projects for home sewists and playing with her flock of sheep.

Home Base: Spokane, WA
Visit: katrinawalker.com



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tips & tricks



BOBBIN-BOUND

When stitching out large projects, pre-wind multiple bobbins so you don't have to stop embroidering if the bobbin runs out.

Christine S., email

SAMPLE SQUARES

Use a 6" square or a 9" square when stitching out sample designs. Use the sample squares for a funky patchwork quilt.

Becky H., Facebook



DOUBLE-SIDED WONDER

When hooping lightweight stabilizer or fabric, place double-sided adhesive tape on the long inner edges of the hoop to prevent movement during stitching.

Neva C., Facebook

TULLE TIME

When embroidering towels, use tulle as a topper to prevent the threads from sinking into the fabric pile.

Karen R., Facebook



Visit cmemag.com

for techniques and tricks to expand your embroidery horizons.



ON TRACK

For perfect design placement in the hoop, mark the design horizontal and vertical center-lines on the project fabric using chalk or removable fabric marker.

Joyce J., Facebook

Send your tips and tricks

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1



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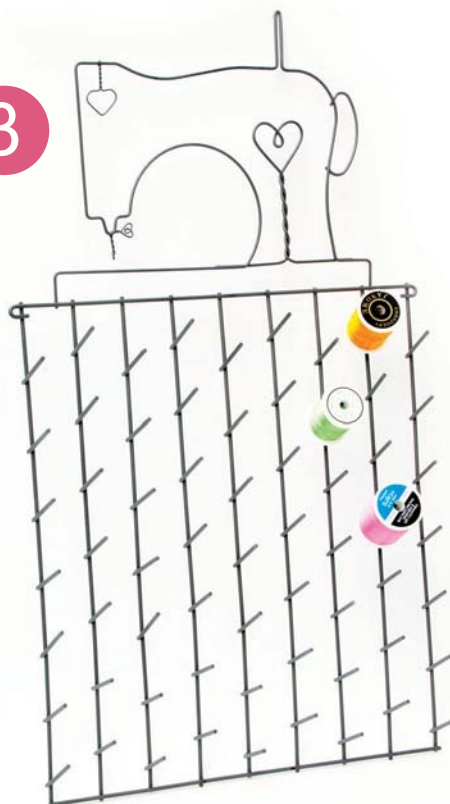
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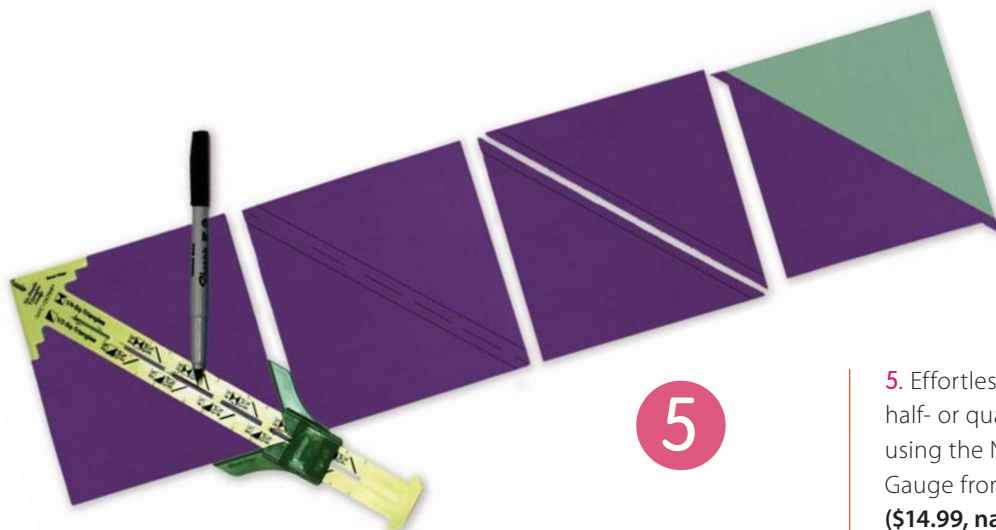
3



4



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5

5. Effortlessly mark, cut and stitch half- or quarter-square triangles using the No-Hassle Triangles Gauge from Nancy's Notions. **(\$14.99, nancysnotions.com)**



6

6. The sharp, detailed tips of the Kai 4" Bent Handle snips are perfect for cutwork, trimming jump threads and cutting buttonholes. If worse comes to worst, they're great for removing satin stitches from embroidery designs too. **(\$14.99, kaiscissors.com)**

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7

must haves

the latest & greatest tools & designs

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2. Celebrate El Dia de los Muertos ("The Day of the Dead" in Spanish, a Mexican holiday celebrating those who have passed) with the scary cute **Sugar Skulls Appliqué collection** from Bunnycup Embroidery. (\$20, bunnycup.com)
3. Decorate your fabric shopping bag or embroidery machine cover in themed style with the **Crafty Cuties Mini Collection** by Ravens Nest Embroidery. (\$14, kreationsbykara.com)
4. Liven up your kitchen décor with the vintage animated **Cheers! design** from Martha Pullen Company's 2015 Internet Embroidery Club. Club membership includes hundreds of machine embroidery designs, including alphabet collections, seasonal embellishments and more. (\$69/annual membership, embroidery.marthapullen.com)
5. Embellish totes, quilts, tea towels and more using uplifting quotes in chalkboard typography from the **Cherished Chalkboard Moments collection** by Embroidery Library. (\$3.49 and up, emblibrary.com)
6. Protect surfaces from water rings while showing off your crafty side. Stitch a set of in-the-hoop **Owl Square Coasters** from Sealed With A Stitch for functional décor with a woodland twist. (\$5, sealedwithastitch.com)
7. Stitch regal designs with the **Gryphon collection** from Zundt Design. The mythical winged creature lends a majestic air to any project. (\$49, zundtdesign.com)



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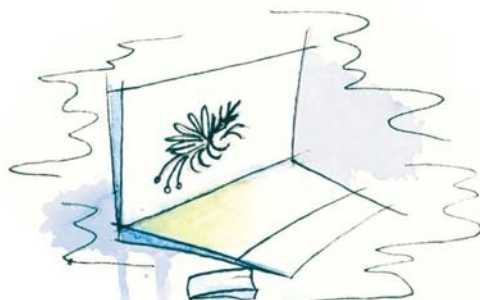
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DOWN TO BUSINESS

by Kay Hickman

Can an embroidery hobby become a money-making business? For many people, the answer is yes. However, there are many factors to consider when deciding to start an embroidery business. Learn the ins and outs of creating a successful venture.

ENJOYMENT

Embroidering for profit is different from doing it for fun. While the steps are generally the same, when embroidering for customers, many of the creative decisions are out of your hands. The creations may be of little interest to you personally. Some people find this kind of work interesting and challenging, while others find it tedious and difficult. If embroidery is normally a leisurely activity, working against deadlines may be an adjustment. Think about your personality type and relationship with embroidery. Is it the embroidery process you enjoy or the creative freedom? Know yourself before jumping into a business venture.

COMMITMENT

Running a business of any type takes a serious commitment of time and effort. Determine whether or not the kind of uninterrupted time it takes to fill orders and meet deadlines can be set aside. Adding a side business to an already busy lifestyle may often mean working late or early hours. Starting even a small business also requires some capital investment to buy supplies and potentially equipment. There may also be business registration fees, depending on state and local ordinances, and advertising funds for marketing the business outside a small group of people. An often overlooked requirement is space. Not only is workspace needed but also a location to store your projects in progress. If working from home, a second location either in or out of your home may be necessary for meeting with clients.

GOALS

Knowing up front what you hope to accomplish with the business will help with setting priorities and making good decisions. If the goal is to earn a little spending money with occasional business, then a much more casual approach can be taken than if you are hoping to truly supplement or build income. Perhaps you want to build a larger business eventually. Whatever the goals, write them down. Determine what you're willing to commit in order to achieve those goals.

CHOOSING A BUSINESS MODEL

In the realm of machine embroidery, there are a number of business models to pursue. Personality, skills, and available space and equipment all factor into deciding which model to use. The business can operate exclusively with one of these models or a combination of them.

Model 1: Selling Your Crafts

One model is to create items in advance and sell them. This option is often chosen by those who like the creative process, as they get to choose what they make, although every crafter has to find the sweet spot between what they like and what will sell. When making and selling crafts, there are a number

of venues for selling wares, such as crafter's malls, craft fairs, consignment shops, and of course online platforms, such as Etsy.

Model 2: Custom-Order Specialty Items

If the idea of crafting is appealing but the commitment to building up an inventory isn't, try promoting custom gifts and crafts. With this model, create a few samples, and then promote the ability to customize those samples to the customer's needs. With this model, specializing in certain items, such as baby clothes or pillows, is an option. Excellent communication skills to clearly meet the customer's expectations is crucial with this model.

Model 3: Monogramming

Perhaps the least creative but potentially most profitable option is a standard monogramming business. With this model, promote the ability to add names to team jackets and jerseys, or stitch logos on shirts or bags. Often with this model, multiples of the same thing are needed, such as 20 jackets for a business with the same logo or 30 team shirts all embroidered with different players' names. This model allows for the greatest revenue at a time, but also requires the biggest commitment of time, space, supplies and equipment.

Model 4: Digitizing Services

If you've fallen in love with creating your own designs using your embroidery software, you might love making designs for others as well. Keep in mind



Tip Always check the copyright rules for any design collection you plan to use on an item for sale.



that digitizing for others requires a different level of skill than for personal use. The design has to be made so that someone else can easily use it. Custom digitizing might be as simple as laying out lettering, or it could be trying to convert a complex piece of artwork to embroidery. Consider skill level and willingness to work long hours at the computer when choosing this option. Also remember you'll need to test-stitch designs before providing files to clients.

TAXES & BUSINESS PERMIT LAWS

Every state and municipality has different regulations regarding how to register a business. It may be possible to report income as an individual without actually forming a business, but keep track of expenses and sales in order to properly account for income taxes.

It might be more beneficial to form a business entity. There are many options for business entities, and the rules for setting one up vary by state. Contact the secretary of state, or a local organization that helps small businesses such as a chamber of commerce, to help decide what setup is best.

Regardless of business structure, if items are made for resale, a sales tax permit is needed in order to collect sales tax in the locations where items are sold.

Knowing up front what you hope to accomplish with the business will help with setting priorities and making good decisions.

GETTING STARTED

Once committed to starting an embroidery business and the business structure that works best, it's time to get the word out to get some business!

START WITH YOUR OWN NETWORK

Have business cards made and hand them out to family and friends. Let them know what you're doing and what kind of business you're looking for. Ask them to share your name if they hear of anyone looking for the kind of services you provide.

BUILD YOUR NETWORK

Attend local networking events, such as your local chamber of commerce. Often these groups sponsor networking sessions specifically for people to swap cards and talk about their businesses.

Ask your local quilt shop and sewing stores if they ever get requests for the kinds of services you offer. If so, leave a card and a sample of your work, if possible.

Always ask clients for a referral. If they're happy with the work, ask them if they know anyone else who might patronize your business.

ADVERTISE

Advertising means getting the word out to potential customers who don't already know you. Depending on the type and quantity of business desired, consider different forms of advertising:

an ad in the local newspaper; a listing on Craigslist under service providers; setting up a Facebook page and/or using paid Facebook advertising; or setting up and promoting a business website.

MARKETING

Regardless of the advertising options chosen, great photography of the work or products is essential. If handy with a camera, do this yourself with a few simple tools, such as a lightbox and a digital camera. Or perhaps a photographer friend will "swap services." Great photography can greatly improve product appeal.

Another aspect of marketing to consider is branding. Choose a business name and logo that reflects the type of business you're pursuing. If hoping to gain mostly sports teams as clients, consider making that part of the branding.

SETTING UP YOUR WORKSPACE

Get the embroidery area ready to work. It may be necessary to separate personal supplies from work supplies for accounting and tax purposes. Consider-



ing the volume of work that's going to be done, a different machine might be needed. Not all machines are warranted for commercial work. Check with a dealer for details.

If spending many hours per day embroidering, consider a multi-needle commercial embroidery machine. These machines are termed multi-needle machines because they have anywhere from six to 16 needles. This eliminates the need to frequently change thread colors on the machine, which is ideal if creating multiples of a particular design. These machines are also generally much faster than a home embroidery machine and are capable of stitching on small items more easily, such as caps.

PRICING

One of the most difficult aspects of starting a service-based business is knowing how much to charge for a project. There are three major factors that go into determining the price of a product or service:

1. Cost of Supplies

The direct cost of supplies, including thread, needles, stabilizers, and wear and tear on equipment, all have to be considered when setting a price. Typically, this cost is passed to the customer with an upcharge, meaning that the cost of supplies to the customer is more than the price paid by the producer. The upcharge on supplies helps pay for the hidden costs of supplies, such as storage, maintenance or shipping.

2. Labor Charge

For a service-based business, the majority of the profit from a project comes



from the labor charge, which covers the time spent on the project. When determining the amount of time, consider all of the time actually spent on the project: time spent sourcing on the Internet or in stores purchasing supplies; time spent on the phone or in person with the client; setup and cleanup time (hooping, threading, stitching, removing stabilizer, pressing or preparing the article for final presentation).

Then, determine a reasonable hourly rate needed to make the project profitable. Consider what could be earned or saved if that time was spent doing something else.

3. Market Value

The cost of supplies and the labor cost should determine a price for the product or service. However, there's one more factor in setting a price—the customer's willingness to pay it. Research what others in the area are charging. Check with embroidery companies, go online to craft sites, and ask friends and family who have used embroidery services. If your prices are considerably higher or lower than similar services, you may need to adjust.

Be cautious of setting prices too low. If a customer contracts with you simply because of your low price, they may not

be loyal to you if they find a price lower than yours.

WHAT CAN YOU SELL?

If using a commercial embroidery design, whether purchased online or in a physical form, such as a CD or USB version, check the copyright rules for the chosen design collection. These are found in the packaging or in the information about the design online.

Copyrights vary according to the particular design company/digitizer. Although a few will grant permission to use the design on an unlimited amount of projects and sales venues, most limit what can or cannot be done in some manner.

There may be a limit on the number of articles per design or per design collection. Most limit the venues and grant permission to sell in local venues, such as craft fairs, but sales via mass marketing, sales to retail stores, catalog sales, Internet sales or Internet auctions are strictly forbidden. If planning to sell via these markets, be sure to use a design that grants you that privilege.

If offering digitizing services, you may also be held liable for copyright infringement, even if the customer provides the artwork. If doing custom work, be sure the client has permission to send the pictures. Some companies may forbid the digitizing of their logo outside of company vendors. Always exercise caution when working with any artwork that's not your own. Most pictures found online are copyrighted and cannot be used for digitizing without permission of the creator. Ⓔ

in the hoop

Candy Cutie

by Lisa Archer

Quickly stitch an ITH bat candy pouch to sell at craft fairs or to give as festive treats for boys and ghouls.



Download the free
ITH Candy Cutie from
cmemag.com/freebies
until Oct. 31, 2015.

ITH DESIGNS

Whether you're making several items for a craft fair or stitching oodles of goodies for an event, in-the-hoop designs are the perfect solution. They're quick and easy to make, and get consistent results every time—a no-brainer when you're stitching the same item over and over. Just gather your supplies and knock out perfectly stitched projects in no time.

When choosing ITH designs to sell at a craft fair, be sure to consider time and material costs in order to make a profit. Choose projects that are fast to stitch since several are needed to fill a booth. Consider the cost and availability of the raw materials. Be sure to offer items that are unique, well-priced and give customers that "wow" factor.


MATERIALS

- + 9"x12" rectangle of black felt
- + 2" square of white felt
- + 3" square of 12-gauge clear vinyl
- + Tear-away stabilizer
- + Black & white all-purpose thread
- + 4" square or larger hoop

EMBROIDER

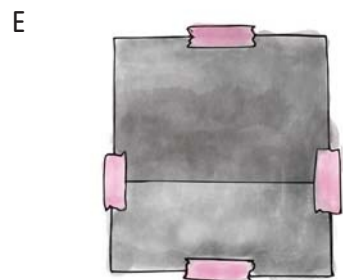
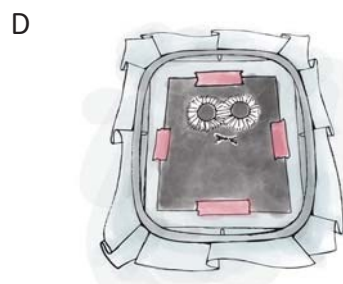
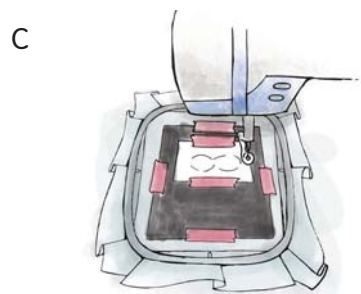
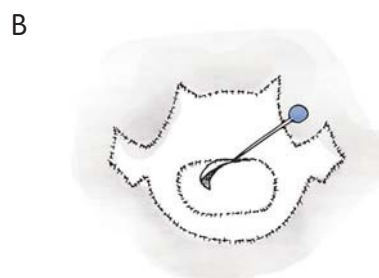
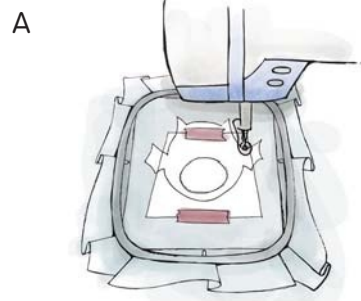
- From the black felt, cut one 5" square and two 3"x5" rectangles.
- Load the Candy Cutie design onto the machine. Thread the needle and bobbin with black thread. Hoop a piece of tear-away stabilizer, and then place the hoop onto the machine.
- Embroider the placement lines onto the stabilizer.
- Center the vinyl square over the oval placement line. Tape the vinyl edges to the stabilizer. Embroider the tacking stitches **(A)**.
- Remove the hoop from the machine, but don't remove the stabilizer from the hoop. Place the hoop wrong side up on a flat work surface. Trim any thread tails around the oval.
- Carefully remove the stabilizer from inside the oval stitching line by holding a pin horizontally and piercing the stabilizer without piercing the vinyl. Run the pin along the stitching line to gently remove the stabilizer **(B)**.
- Re-place the hoop onto the machine. Center the 5" black felt square over the bat placement line. Tape each edge to the stabilizer. Embroider the tacking stitches.
- Thread the needle and bobbin with white thread. Embroider the eye placement lines.
- Center the white felt square over the placement lines; tape the upper and lower edges. Embroider the eye outlines **(C)**.
- Remove the hoop from the machine. Trim the excess felt just beyond the eye stitching lines.

Tip Select a wool-blend felt rather than acrylic for a nicer look and cleaner cut edges.

- Re-place the hoop onto the machine. Embroider the eyes and mouth.
- Thread the needle and bobbin with black thread. Embroider the pupils **(D)**.
- Remove the hoop from the machine. Turn the hoop to the wrong side. Center one black felt rectangle over the bat lower half, aligning one long edge with the oval upper edge. Tape the lower edge to secure.
- Center the remaining black felt rectangle over the bat, overlapping the first-rectangle upper edge by 1". Tape the upper edge and sides to secure **(E)**.
- Re-place the hoop onto the machine. Embroider the outline stitches.
- Remove the hoop from the machine and the project from the hoop. Tear away all stabilizer from the design.
- Carefully trim away the felt inside the oval to expose the vinyl. 

DESIGN

Candy Pouch: Download the ITH Candy Cutie free from cmemag.com/freebies until Oct. 31, 2015. Purchase the design at picklepietdesigns.com after the expiration date.



MODERN Table Runner

by Katrina Walker, courtesy of RNK Distributing

Adorn your home with this beautiful table runner or wall hanging featuring lustrous silk dupioni, pieced and embellished with custom appliqué.



Floriani Dream Weave Fusible® eliminates fraying and allows for easy silk piecework. Floriani software makes it simple to convert clip art into beautifully textured designs using a variety of motif fills, and Floriani stabilizers beautifully support stitches for perfect results every time.

Materials

- Seven fat quarters of silk dupioni in a range of colors from blue to green
- Five fat quarters of silk dupioni in a range of colors from golden orange to red
- ½ yard silk dupioni in a coordinating blue or green color for backing
- Embroidery designs for Design No. 1, Design No. 2 and Design No. 3, provided on rnkdistributing.com/articles-news.html
- One package of Floriani Dream Weave Fusible
- Floriani Perfect Stick Cutaway
- Floriani embroidery thread (sample shown: color PF1053)
- Bobbin thread: sewing and embroidery
- Recommended sewing needle: 80/12 Microtex
- Recommended embroidery needle: 90/14 Topstitch
- 200mmx200mm Quilters' Hoop
- Glue stick (optional)

Finished Size

14" x 41"

Prepare

- From the Floriani Dream Weave Fusible, cut five 6"x16" strips, two 12"x16" strips and five 8" squares.
- Arrange the blue and green fat quarters in a line so that they are in a pleasing

arrangement, such as a color gradation from blue to green. Starting from the left, number them 1 through 7.

- Fuse the five 6"x16" strips of Floriani Dream Weave Fusible to the back of fat quarters 1, 2, 4, 6 and 7, parallel to the horizontal (slubby) grain line. Cut one 5"x16" strip from each.
- Fuse the 12"x16" strips of Floriani Dream Weave Fusible to the back of fat quarters 3 and 5, parallel to the horizontal (slubby) grain line. From these strips, cut two 5"x16" strips each, and label them as 3a, 3b, 5a and 5b.

Construct

All seam allowances are 1/4" unless otherwise noted.

- Arrange the strips together in three sets of three: 1, 2, 3a; 3b, 4, 5a; 5b, 6 and 7 **(A)**.
- Sew the strips together lengthwise, using 1/4" seam, to create three sections measuring 14"x16". Press the strips as sewn, then press them to one side.
- Cut the sections into square blocks, measuring 14"x14".
- Sew the sections together, with the stripes facing horizontal on the end blocks and vertical on the middle block. Align the center block so that strips 3a and 3b and 5a and 5b are touching. Press the seams.
- Find the center of the pieced top, both lengthwise and widthwise. Mark it with removable chalk or another marking tool to determine placement of the center appliqué.
- Mark the pieced top 8" and 16" on either side of the center mark to determine the placement of the remaining four appliqués.
- Fuse the 8" squares of Floriani Dream Weave Fusible to the back of the five fat

quarters ranging from golden orange to red. Cut around the square fused area.

- Arrange the squares in a pleasing order, such as a gradation from golden orange to red. Number the squares 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.
- Download designs No. 1, No. 2 and No. 3 at rnkdistributing.com/articles-news.html. Load the designs onto the embroidery machine.

Embroider

- Choose a thread color that coordinates with square No. 3, which will be the center square.
- Set up the embroidery machine for embroidery, and hoop Floriani Perfect Stick Cutaway into the 200mmx200mm hoop.
- Place the pieced top into the hoop, pressing gently to adhere the top to the Floriani Perfect Stick Cutaway and aligning the marks for the appliqué on the far left.
- Stitch thread color 1, which will be the placement stitch.
- When the machine stops for color 2, place the prepared 8" square over the placement stitching line, making sure that the fabric completely covers the stitching line.
- Slowly stitch color 2, which will tack down the appliqué fabric.
- Gently remove the hoop from the machine, and trim the appliqué fabric around the tacking stitches, trimming as closely as possible. Do not remove the project from the hoop.

- Re-attach the hoop, and start the machine to stitch the appliqué (satin stitch) and design embroidery.
- Remove the top from the hoop, and re-hoop the 200mmx200mm hoop with Floriani Perfect Stick Cutaway.
- Place the pieced top into the hoop, pressing gently to adhere the top to the Floriani Perfect Stick Cutaway, and aligning the marks for the appliqué to the right of the one just stitched.
- Embroider with applique Design No. 2.
- Continue as with previous steps to embroider the third, fourth and fifth appliqués. The five appliqués are stitched with this design order: 1, 2, 3, 2, 1.
- Once embroidery is complete, carefully trim off any excess stabilizer, and press the embroidered top using a press cloth.

Assemble

- Place the embroidered top on the backing fabric, wrong sides together, aligning the top so that at least 1" of excess backing fabric shows on all sides.
- Pin or baste the top to the backing, and trim the backing so that there is 1" of backing fabric showing on all sides.
- Press the backing fabric toward the raw edge of the top so that the raw edge of the backing touches the raw edge of the top. Fold the pressed edge of the backing onto the top, creating a 1/2" faux binding, and pin or baste in place.
- Fold in at the corners to create a miter.
- Edgestitch the backing in place to create faux binding and finish the table runner. ✱

A





floral *Flair*

BY KATRINA WALKER

Beautifully embroidered sweatshirts are making a fashionable appearance in upscale stores and catalogs everywhere. Create this stylish on-trend look for a fresh addition to your fall wardrobe.

MATERIALS

- + Ready-made lightweight cotton blend jersey or heavy-weight interlock sweatshirt
- + Stabilizer: cut-away, tear-away & water-soluble (depending on chosen sweatshirt; see “Sources.”)
- + Embroidery thread
- + Large-scale embroidery designs

SWEATSHIRTS

- Choosing the right sweatshirt for this fabulous design application is the first step, and not all sweatshirts are created equal. The latest fashion sweatshirts are available in a wide range of weights and silhouettes that differ from traditional sweatshirts, so there are many more choices than just the traditional heavyweight sweatshirt. When designing a large, all-over floral motif, choose a sweatshirt with side seams that are easily taken apart for embroidery. If a traditionally ribbed waistband is preferred, consider removing the waistband seam between the side seams to accommodate embroidery hoops and keep the remainder of the garment out of the embroidery area more easily.
- Consider altering more than just the surface of the sweatshirt. If opening up the sweatshirt side seams for embroidery, that’s the perfect time to also alter the neckline, fit, hem or sleeves. Current trends encourage a boxy, cropped look that’s perfect for layering. It may be more fashionable to remove the waistband ribbing entirely, and then finish using a basic folded hem, trim or even a clean raw edge.



- In the featured charcoal sweatshirt, the lower band was removed and the sweatshirt was shortened to create a more flattering, cropped length. The lower band was reapplied after embroidery, and the side seams re-sewn to create a cropped, less bulky sweatshirt. The side seams were also taken in.

DESIGN

- The sweatshirt fabric weight also plays an important role in the chosen embroidery. Instead of traditional sweatshirt fleece fabric (smooth knit face with a brushed back), modern

sweatshirts are available in everything from light jersey knit to heavy interlock. Each is suitable for layering, but the fabric density directly relates to the stitch density that’s most appropriate for each fabric.

- For lighter-weight layering sweatshirts, choose designs with light stitch densities to avoid the need for heavy stabilizers that will ruin the soft drape of the sweatshirt. Leave the heavy designs to the denser knits as they can carry the weight of the design and the corresponding layers of stabilizer and remain wearable.

SWEATSHIRT SPARKLE

Looking for a little extra bling for your fashion sweatshirt? Glue-on or hot-fix rhinestones are perfect for adding that bit of sparkle to liven up a soft floral design.

MATERIALS

- Flat backed glue-on or hot-fix rhinestones (available online or in craft stores)
- Fabric glue (such as Jewel Bond or Gem Set) or heat-setting applicator
- Non-stick pressing sheet

EMBELLISH

- Place a non-stick pressing sheet under the embroidery design on a flat surface. If using heat-set stones, make sure the surface is heat resistant. With the flat back down, place the stones on the garment in a pleasing placement. Not sure what looks best? Simply sprinkle the stones onto the garment, and then remove any that appear out of place.
- For glue-on stones, place a small dab of glue on the sweatshirt in the desired place. Gently place the flat back of the rhinestone onto the glue, and press into place. Let the glue dry before moving the sweatshirt.
- For heat-set stones, select the applicator tip that matches the size of the stone, if applicable. Place the stone as desired on the sweat-



shirt. Touch the hot tip of the wand to the surface of the stone, applying light pressure from a vertical position, not at an angle.

- Heat the stone for several seconds. Remove the wand from the stone, and allow the stone to cool completely without moving or touching it. Once the stone has cooled, test for full adhesion. If the glue hasn't melted and bonded completely, reheat with the applicator wand for several more seconds.

STABILIZER

- All sweatshirt fabrics are knits, which require at least one layer of permanent stabilizer to preserve the designs through wearing and laundering. Just as the density of the embroidery design should be in proportion to the density of the sweatshirt fabric, the support of the stabilizer should correspond to the amount of stretch in the sweatshirt fabric.
- Cut-away stabilizer is recommended for all knit fabrics. Many cut-away stabilizers are available in a very lightweight, soft form that provides support without adding stiffness. They pair well with a floating underlayer of water-soluble stabilizer for less dense designs on lightweight knits and with a floating underlayer of tear-away stabilizer for dense designs on heavier knits. Use as many layers as needed for stability; the denser the design, the more stabilizer is needed to support the stitches.
- For all knits, it's highly recommended to use a temporary adhesive to adhere the fabric to the stabilizer before embroidery. Whether using a layer of adhesive-backed stabilizer, basting spray or another method, adhering the knit to the stabilizer keeps the fabric flat during embroidery. Without adhering it, the fabric shifts away from the stitching, causing stretching in the stitched areas and bulges in the spaces between embroidery. A lightweight fusible interfacing may be used to prevent stretching in the design area as well.

COMBINING DESIGNS

- Although there are many floral designs available, not all of them work

well when combined into a multi-component design. Look for designs with irregular leaves and stems that aren't obviously shaped into circles, borders, corners or other geometric shapes. If they're part of a design pack that has extra elements, such as freestanding leaves or buds, it's even better. Think of a cottage garden or similar arrangement; Mother Nature doesn't grow flowers in perfect symmetry, and neither should you. Use rotation to blend designs with one another. Sometimes adding or deleting features, such as leaves and stems, can also help design elements flow more smoothly with one another.

- Combining designs into large floral groupings also requires some consideration in terms of scale. Scale is relative to each person. A larger sweatshirt can carry a larger design and still appear to be in the same scale as a smaller sweatshirt carrying a relatively smaller design. If the machine or software can resize, consider customizing the size of the embroidery to fit personal scale. For a large floral, using a few large designs is often more harmonious than using many smaller designs to fill the same space. If using a large number of designs to fill the space, the scale is too small; size the designs larger. Print paper templates of the designs in different sizes to audition them for the project.

COLOR

- Embroidering large-scale designs, such as florals, onto a garment makes a bold statement. But the thread colors used have an even greater influence on how bold that statement appears. If a bold design isn't your style, consider using a thread palette



SWEATSHIRT EMBROIDERY AT A GLANCE

Follow these main points when embroidering on sweatshirts.

- Knit garments, such as sweatshirts, require cut-away stabilizer for best embroidery design results.
- Consider updating the sweatshirt look with an alternative hem, fit, neckline treatment, or embellishment in addition to the upscale embroidery.
- Match the design density with the fabric weight for perfect embroidery.
- Choose embroidery designs that are freestanding, with no obvious borders, corners or other geometric shapes for the easiest blending.
- For the most natural looking floral design, try mixing and matching, rotating and even editing the embroidery designs to create one seamless floral arrangement.
- For the boldest contrast, use light thread colors on dark fabric or dark thread colors on light fabric. For a softer look, use threads that are the same shade as the fabric color; try light on light or dark on dark.
- Audition the thread colors by test-stitching on scrap fabric or by pooling threads on the fabric to determine how they contrast with the sweatshirt color.
- Use printed templates to audition different thread colors and design sizes while planning the design combination.



- Trim away edges of cut-away stabilizer with pinking shears to soften edges for less show-through on lightweight knits.


that's similar in color saturation (pale on pale or dark on dark) to the sweatshirt background. Pale colors on a dark shirt, or vice versa, always stand out. Make a big splash by choosing colors that are much more (or less) vivid than the fabric. Test whether the colors will stand out or blend in by pooling the threads on the sweatshirt. Stand back several feet to determine if they appear vivid or soft in contrast to the sweatshirt fabric.

EMBROIDER

- Begin by determining the embroidery placement. Measure the design area to determine the hoop size and the number of hoopings required. Use printed templates or software (computer or embroidery machine) to determine the design layout, combining and rotating or otherwise editing the designs to achieve the desired look.
- Prepare the sweatshirt for embroidery. Open the side seams and the back por-

tion of the waistband ribbing if needed. If using a fusible to stabilize the embroidery area, adhere it into place.

- Mark the placement of the design(s) on the sweatshirt using chalk, stickers or another method. Even if embroidering a combined design in one large hoop, still mark the horizontal and vertical centerlines of the design placement on the garment to aid in hooping accurately. It's difficult to adjust large embroidery design placement in the hoop more than a small amount, so it's important to hoop or adhere the garment in the hoop as accurately as possible.
- Hoop or adhere the sweatshirt to the stabilizer in the hoop. It's generally easier to begin at the sweatshirt upper edge and work toward the lower edge. Make sure that the non-embroidered areas of the sweatshirt are well out of the way of the stitching area.

- Embroider the design, monitoring carefully to ensure that the sweatshirt excess stays out of the stitching area.
- Once the embroidery is complete, remove the sweatshirt from the hoop and carefully remove any excess stabilizer. If needed, use pinking shears to soften the edges of the cut-away stabilizer to prevent show-through on thin knits.
- Reassemble the sweatshirt if needed, incorporating any desired alterations. 

SOURCES

Husqvarna Viking carries Inspira Whisper Web Mesh, Inspira Stitch Point Cut-away Light, Inspira Tear-Away Light, Inspira Tear N' Wash, Inspira Aqua Magic & Inspira Aqua Magic Plus stabilizers: husqvarnaviking.com.

DESIGNS

Lightweight Sweaters: Anita Goodesign, Charlotte's Flowers: anitagoodesignonline.com

Heavyweight Sweater: Embroidery Library, Russian Folk Flowers: emblibrary.com

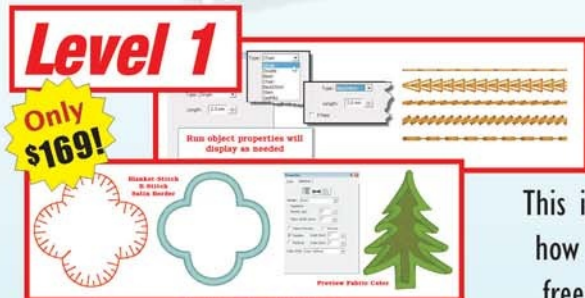


- This Issue's Inside Look - **StitchArtist™**

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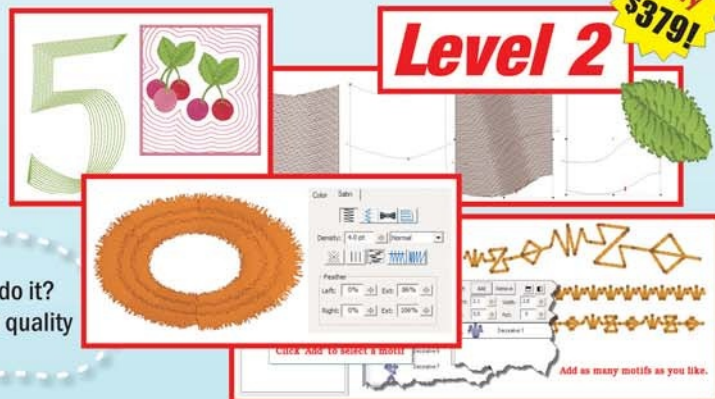
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Sweet Treat *Basket*

BY AMANDA CARESTIO

Round out your holiday décor with this ghoulish goodie basket. A stitched strip of spooky embroidery designs takes center stage on this simple design, complete with handy straps for greeting trick-or-treaters at your door.



SAMPLE SEWN BY KATE VAN FLEET



Purchase the Sweet Treat Basket kit,

which includes all the fabric and fleece you'll need to make the basket, plus the entire Spooky Treats design collection, at shopsewitall.com.

MATERIALS

- + ½ yard each of outer & lining fabric
- + 5"x37" strip of solid purple fabric
- + ¾ yard of fusible fleece
- + Lightweight tear-away stabilizer
- + Thread: embroidery & matching all-purpose
- + Temporary spray adhesive
- + Hand sewing needle
- + Embroidery designs: border & spider

CUT

- From the outer fabric, lining and fusible fleece, cut four 8"x12" rectangles, one each from the outer and lining fabrics and two from the fusible fleece; designate as the basket base. Round each corner using the curved edge of a plate or cup.
- From the outer fabric, cut one 3"x37" strip for the pieced panel and two 4"x5" strips for the handle centers.
- From the lining fabric, cut one 1½"x37" strip for the pieced panel, one 6½"x37" strip for the lining and four 4"x6" strips for the handles.



- From the fusible fleece, cut two 7"x37" strips and four 1½"x17" strips for the handles. Piece together strips to achieve the needed length.

EMBROIDER

- Download the Spooky Spider design from cmemag.com/freebies until Oct. 31, 2015. Purchase the design at shopsewitall.com after the expiration date. Load the border design onto the embroidery machine.
- Hoop a piece of stabilizer. Using temporary spray adhesive, center the purple strip right side up vertically in the hoop. Place the hoop onto the machine. Embroider the design, changing thread colors as necessary.
- Once the embroidery is complete, remove the hoop from the machine and the fabric from the hoop. Tear away the stabilizer from the design perimeter. Trim the strip to 3"x37", centering the designs.

CONSTRUCT

Use ¼" seam allowances unless otherwise noted.

- With right sides together, stitch the embroidered-strip lower edge to the 3" outer-fabric strip. Stitch the 1½" lining strip to the embroidered-strip upper edge; press open the seams.
- Beginning 1" from one short end, place the 7" fusible fleece over the pieced-strip wrong side; fuse following the manufacturer's instructions **(A)**. Fold and press the 1" edge to the wrong side. Repeat for the 6½" lining strip and the remaining fusible fleece

A





strip, trimming any excess from the long edge.

- Fuse the fleece base to the outer-fabric base wrong side. Repeat for the lining base and the remaining fusible fleece base. With right sides together, beginning along one long edge, pin the pieced strip to the base, beginning with the folded over short edge **(B)**. Stitch using a $\frac{1}{2}$ " seam allowance. Turn the bag right side out and edgestitch the pieced-strip fold.
- With right sides together, stitch the lining strip to the lining base per the outer bag, beginning with the strip

folded end. Pin the strip upper edges together, but don't edgestitch the fold.

- With right sides together, align one lining handle with each outer-fabric handle short end; stitch, and then press open the seams. Fold one long edge $\frac{1}{4}$ " toward the wrong side; press. Center the fusible fleece strip over the handle with the fusible side down; fuse **(C)**. Center another fusible fleece strip on the first, with the fusible side up. Fold the fabric raw edge over the fleece strip, and then fold the folded edge over the fleece; press in place. Stitch two rows of stitching down the



Download the Spider design from cmemag.com/freebies until Oct. 31, 2015. Purchase the design, plus the entire Spooky Treats collection, at shopsewital.com.

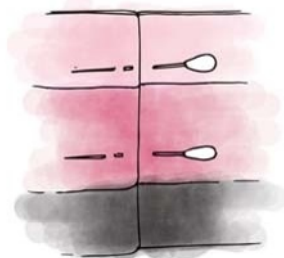
center of the handle $\frac{1}{4}$ " apart, catching the folded edge. Repeat to construct the remaining handle.

- On the outer bag, pin-mark the center of each long basket side. Position each handle short end 3" on either side of the pin with right sides together, ensuring the handle isn't twisted; pin **(D)**. Repeat for the other side.
- Insert the outer bag into the lining with right sides together, aligning the strip seams. Pin the upper edge, and then stitch using a $\frac{1}{2}$ " seam allowance, making sure to catch all the layers. Backstitch along the handles for added security.
- Turn the bag right side out through the lining opening. Whipstitch the lining opening closed. Tuck the lining into the basket; press the upper edge. Topstitch $\frac{1}{4}$ " in from the top and bottom edge of the embroidered strip. **(E)**

DESIGN

CME, Spooky Treats, Spooky Border: shopsewital.com

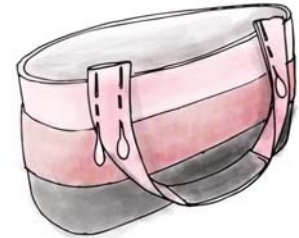
B



C



D



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A black leather armchair with a tufted backrest and a curved wooden base. Resting on the seat is a large, square faux fur pillow with a black and tan tiger print. The pillow has a decorative border with a repeating geometric pattern. In the center of the pillow, there is a white, intricate embroidery design that appears to be a stylized animal or figure, created using the 'ghost embroidery' technique. In the background, a brass vase holds two dried, spherical plant specimens on sticks.

animal *Instinct*

BY MARTINA GIBBONEY

Discover a unique technique called ghost embroidery, which hides an embroidery design in the fabric pile and print. It's a subtle yet striking embellishment that adds interest to garments or home-décor projects. Learn how to successfully use ghost embroidery to enhance a faux fur pillow with professional tips on selecting the correct design and stabilizer.

FAUX FUR

Faux fur is a napped fabric made with short to long fibers that mimic real fur. For best embroidery results, select a faux fur with a pile no longer than ¼" to prevent the fur from covering the embroidery design.

Choose a faux fur print that represents the chosen design, such as faux tiger fur for a feline embroidery design or faux zebra fur for a white tiger or zebra. For a different look, coordinate a faux animal fur with a floral embroidery design.

DESIGNS

Choose low-density embroidery designs without a lot of fill or satin stitches. Dense designs cause needle breakage and tension issues because of the extra thread thickness and fur density. Select outline designs with a few detail stitches that allow the faux fur to fill in the design and look as if the fur is the animal's real fur. Red-, black- or whitework embroidery offer diverse designs that are compatible for faux fur.

THREAD

To achieve the ghost embroidery effect, select a thread color that blends into the faux fur, a color that slightly attracts the eye but needs a closer look to really see the design. Always test-stitch the designs in several dif-

ferent thread colors on faux fur scraps. Choose the thread color that makes the animal design look like it's hiding, and then coming alive before your eyes.

DESIGN PLACEMENT

Consider the project style elements, such as a pillow or vest, when determining the design placement. Faux fur nap typically lies down from top to bottom. Run your hand across the fur in different directions to determine the nap direction and keep this in mind when cutting out the pattern.

Study the fabric print, such as the stripe or spot distance from each other or a smooth or uneven pile, to determine if these details add or detract from the design. To create an unexpected element, don't position the designs in a symmetrical pattern. Place test-stitches over the desired project area to visualize the design placement.

CUTTING

Faux fur has tiny fibers that scatter everywhere when cut, so avoid taking deep breaths during cutting. Shake cut faux fur into a trashcan and vacuum the work area during and after cutting. Cut faux fur from the fabric wrong side with a box cutter, and only cut the fabric backing, avoiding the fur pile.

faux fur pillow

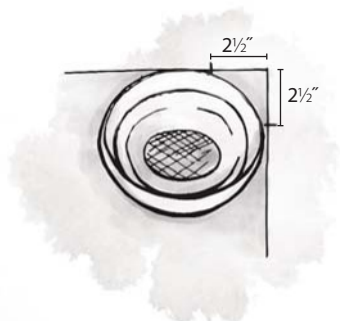
MATERIALS

- + ½ yard of faux fur (pillow front)
- + ⅔ yard of coordinating faux fur (pillow back & borders)
- + 2½ yards of ⅜"-diameter welting
- + Water-soluble stabilizer & topper
- + 16" square pillow form
- + Thread: all-purpose, bobbin & embroidery
- + Needles: size 90/14 ballpoint, embroidery & hand sewing
- + Cotton swab or small paintbrush
- + Zipper foot
- + Pattern tracing paper
- + 18"-long straight ruler
- + 8"-diameter bowl or plate
- + Walking foot (optional)
- + Animal design (approximately 5"x7")

DRAFT

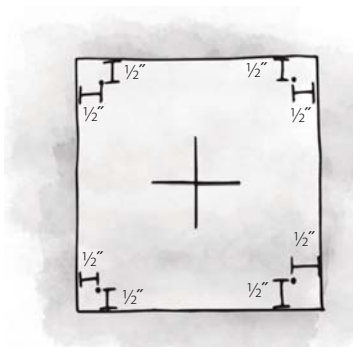
- Draw a 17¼" square on pattern tracing paper. Draw a vertical centerline in the square to designate the grainline.
- Measure 2½" from each corner along the square edges; mark. Position the

A



bowl or plate rounded edge with each corner mark; trace the bowl or plate edge **(A)**. Repeat to round each remaining corner. Designate the pattern as the pillow back.

B



- Draw a 10½" square on pattern tracing paper. Draw a vertical and horizontal centerline at the square center.

- Measure ½" from each edge at each corner; mark **(B)**. Designate the pattern as the pillow front.

- From the pattern tracing paper, cut a 7"x20" rectangle. Fold the paper in half widthwise. Position the paper on a flat work surface with the folded edge on the right.

- Draw a horizontal line perpendicular to the fold 1" below the long upper edge; label the line "A." Draw a horizontal line perpendicular to the fold 4½" below line A; label the line "B."

- Measure 9¼" from the folded edge along line A; label the point "C." Measure 5" from the folded edge along line B; label the point "D."

- Draw a diagonal line connecting point C and D. Designate the pattern as the border.

- Position the border pattern over the pillow-back pattern, aligning the folded edge with the centerline and line A with the pillow-back upper edge.

- Trace the pillow-back rounded corner onto the border pattern from line A to the diagonal line **(C)**.

- Measure ½" toward the folded edge from point D along line B, and then

Tip

After stitching a seam, turn the fur right side out and pull out hair that's stuck in the seam using a straight pin.

measure ½" above line B; mark as the stitching beginning and end.

- Cut out the border pattern; unfold **(D)**.

EMBROIDER

- From the pillow-front faux fur, cut one square 2" larger than the pillow-front pattern on all sides.

- Install an embroidery needle into the machine. Thread the needle with embroidery thread and the bobbin with bobbin thread.

- Hoop a piece of paper-release adhesive stabilizer with the paper side facing up. Score the paper inside the hoop perimeter, and then gently remove the paper backing to reveal the adhesive.

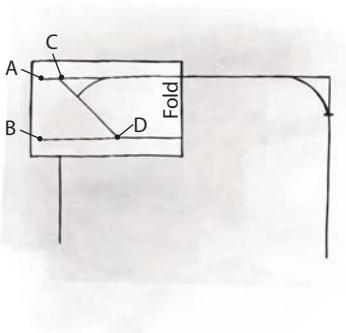
- Mark the hooped stabilizer vertical center using a removable fabric marker.

- Fold the pillow front in half with right sides together along the centerline, with the nap running toward the pillow lower edge.

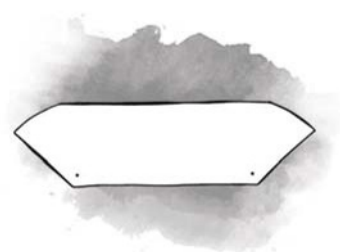
- Align the fold with the marked vertical line on the hooped stabilizer, centering the fabric within the hoop. Unfold the fabric and smooth it into place. Gently press the fabric onto the stabilizer to secure.

- Place a piece of water-soluble topper over the embroidery area.

C



D

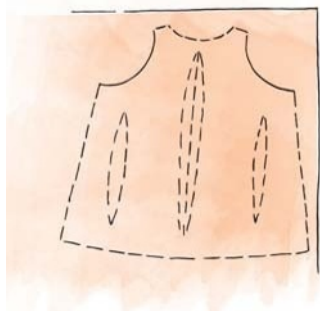


VEST IN SHOW

Discover tips and tricks for using the ghost embroidery technique on a faux fur vest.

- Select a pattern with enough surface area for the chosen embroidery designs. The vest doesn't need to have a boxy shape; it can be fitted, just make sure there's enough room between the seams or darts for the design.
- Trace the pattern onto the faux-fur wrong side with the nap running downward.
- Thread trace seamlines, darts, folded lapels, pockets and other style details with a contrasting thread color (1).
- After laying out the pattern on the faux fur, cut 2" beyond the pattern perimeter to create a large rectangle piece for easier and more precise embroidery and cutting (2).
- After hooping the faux fur, roll the excess fabric between the hoop and machine and use clips or pins to secure to keep it away from the embroidery area.

1



2

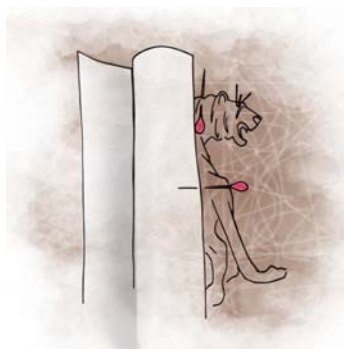


- Use the baste-in-the-hoop feature to secure the layers, if available. Or pin or tape the stabilizer to the lower layers outside the embroidery field before attaching the hoop onto the machine.

E



F



G



- Embroider the design. If the topper rips during stitching, stop the machine and place a topper scrap over the tear; continue stitching.
- Remove the hoop from the machine and trim the jump threads on the pillow-front right side.
- Remove the fabric from the hoop. Carefully lift away the stabilizer from the fabric wrong side, working from the outer edge toward the design.
- Dip a cotton swab or small paintbrush in water, and then trace the design perimeter to wet the stabilizer. Gently lift the stabilizer from the design perimeter (**E**). Don't tear the stabilizer from the design, as it damages the stitching and distorts the design.
- Position the pillow front right side up on a flat work surface. Trace the design perimeter with a straight pin to score the topper. Gently remove the topper from the design. Repeat to remove as much topper as possible from the design interior.
- Place the design under running luke-warm water and gently rub the topper off the fur until all of it has been removed from the fabric right and wrong sides. Removing the stabilizer under running water, rather than soaking, allows the sticky residue to completely wash away instead of settling in the fur.
- Look for tiny clumps or gummy spots of stabilizer and topper on the stitching. If noticeable, continue to gently rub and rinse until the fabric is clean and flexible.

- Roll the faux fur in a towel to remove excess water. Hang to dry.
- Once dry, press the fur if necessary. Position a fur scrap on the pressing surface right side up. Place the pillow front wrong side up over the fur with the nap in the downward direction. Cover with a press cloth. Quickly and lightly press the faux fur on low heat, using steam if necessary.

CUT

- Position the embroidered square right side up on a flat work surface. Find the design center using a ruler. Position the pillow-front pattern over the square, matching the design and pattern center; pin (**F**). Cut out, and then transfer the corner dots to the faux-fur wrong side.
- From the coordinating fur, cut one pillow back and four borders. Transfer the corner dots to the faux-fur wrong side. When cutting the borders, use the straight edge as the grainline and place them vertical or horizontal to the selvage. If desired, cut two borders on the vertical and two on the horizontal for a different look.

CONSTRUCT

Use ½" seam allowances unless otherwise noted.

- Install a ballpoint needle and walking foot (if applicable) onto the machine. Thread the machine with all-purpose thread.
- Align one border lower edge with one pillow-front edge with right sides

together and matching the dots; pin. Stitch, beginning at one dot and ending at the opposite dot **(G)**. Fold the border upward.

- Repeat to stitch a second border piece to the adjacent pillow-front edge.
- Align the adjacent border short edges with right sides together **(H)**. Stitch from the corner dot toward the rounded corner, making sure not to catch the pillow front in the stitching. Finger-press open the seam.
- Repeat to stitch the remaining border pieces to the pillow front and the border short ends together.
- Install a zipper foot onto the machine.
- Align and center the welting raw edge with one pillow-front edge right side. Beginning 2" from the welting beginning, stitch as close to the welting as possible. Continue stitching the welting around the curved edges, clipping into the welting seam allowance up to, but not through, the stitching as needed. End the stitching 2" from the stitching beginning.
- Using a seam ripper or small scissors, remove the stitching from each welting end for approximately 2". Trim the welting cord so the ends abut.
- Trim the welting fabric 1" beyond the cord ends. Fold the welting-end fabric short end $\frac{3}{8}$ " toward the wrong side; finger-press. Wrap the fabric around the cord, covering the bare cord and welting beginning **(I)**. Finish stitching the welting to the pillow front.



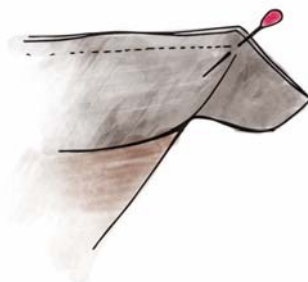
- Position the pillow front and back with right sides together. Stitch the pillow perimeter, leaving a 7"-long centered opening along the pillow lower edge. Turn the pillowcase right side out through the opening.
- Insert the pillow form into the pillowcase.

- Hand stitch the opening closed using a slipstitch or fell stitch. ⓘ

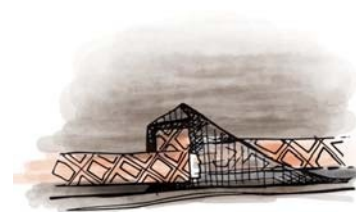
DESIGN

Tiger: Momo-dini Embroidery Art, Tiger! Tiger! Burning Bright; momodini.com

H



I





Q&A with tula *Pink*

BY VERONICA GRAHAM



Famed fabric designer, artist and author Tula Pink lets us in on her creative process and the inspiration behind her latest fabric collection, “Eden.”

Tula Pink is known for her distinct brand of whimsical, colorful designs that blur the lines between reality and fantasy. And yet, each new collection begs the question, “How did Tula come up with that?” (As well as, “How can I get my hands on it right now?”)

Fans, your chance to learn what’s inside Tula’s mind has finally come. Tula’s

new video series will document the creation of her latest collection for FreeSpirit, “Eden,” from start to finish in her St. Joseph, Mo. home studio. Before she makes her big screen debut, though, we couldn’t resist a quick chat with Tula about just what goes on in that one-of-a-kind brain of hers.



Find 6 exclusive project kits, including special tote bags, purses and home décor, all fabricated in Tula's FreeSpirit fabrics, at shopsewitall.com/tula-pink.

Q: What are the first steps in your creative process when you sit down to design a new fabric collection?

A: The first step is always about the story. What am I talking about? Where am I going? What is going to tie all of the prints together? What is the mood? Without a story to tell, the fabric would wander. I need a narrative element to keep me on track, or else a fabric collection would end up with polar bears, octopi and monkeys and would be really confusing for everyone. When I start getting really excited about a concept, the ideas come faster than I can write them down. It's like a frenzy. I write down a million ideas; a few are great, most are terrible, but they all get me to the place I need to go, which is a complete, cohesive fabric story.

Q: Which step(s) in your process do you find most crucial to nailing down your concept for a new collection?

A: After finding the story, it's all about the drawing. I do all of my thinking in the drawing. I will redraw something a hundred times until it feels right. I figure out the repeat in the drawing, and the scale—everything happens in the drawing. The drawing is the foundation. Everything is built on top of it, so if there is a crack in that foundation, it will all fall apart as I move forward. There is no good way to describe when it's "right," but I know it when it is. It falls right on my eye. I can start to see all

of the color ways that could inhabit the drawing. I guess I know it's done when I can see it's future clearly.

Q: Hand-drawing is a major part of what makes a Tula Pink collection. What's helped you remain committed to hand drawing? Is it ever hard to resist the digital age?

A: It definitely goes digital once the drawing is complete. I'll trace the drawing in Adobe Illustrator, but programs are only a tool for execution. Just because you have a hammer doesn't mean that you can now build a house. It helps, but it won't do the job on its own. Drawing is what I do, so there really is no other way for me to begin. Drawing makes sure that my hand is present in the final work.

Q: What was your creative process like for your upcoming collection, "Eden"? Was there an "aha moment" as you were conceptualizing the collection?

A: "Eden" was really fun because I wanted to go a different direction with this one. I had just finished "Elizabeth," which was based on the life of Queen Elizabeth I. It's elegant and over the top and sophisticated and feminine. I wanted the collection that came after it to be very much the opposite while still feeling like a Tula Pink collection. "Eden" is more colorful and eclectic. It's dense with pattern and more primal. There are tigers and elephants and giant atlas moths and designs inspired by detailed tile work. So, I went from the pristine palaces of

England to the vibrant street markets of India. "Elizabeth" is about extravagance and "Eden" is about adventure.

Q: Did you have inspiration sources for the vibrant street markets of India, such as books or movies or people in particular that helped you transport yourself to India?

A: Sometimes there are, and I must have seen something somewhere, but I pretty much just dream it up and go from there. I wasn't trying to be really specific about a place or a time. I think that sometimes too much visual research can become a roadblock. If I have nothing to compare to what I'm doing then it can't be wrong.





Fabrics from Tula's latest collection, "Eden," capture her adventurous spirit. Find them at keepsakequilting.com/tula-pink

Q: What is the narrative you're hoping to tell with "Eden?"

A: I use my fabric collections to escape. I don't get to take a lot of time off, so I explore through my fabric collections. My imagination is basically turbo boosted. It always has been. I pick a place I want to go, and when I close my eyes I can see all of it so vividly. With "Eden" I took an adventure. I have always been fascinated by cultures that are so markedly different than our western culture. I imagined a wild and bustling street market full of color and spices and textures and people that sits just outside a wild and lush paradise teeming with beautiful plants and animals. At that moment that's where I most wanted to be, so that's where I went—in my mind, anyway. I'm a great


armchair explorer. What I can dream up has no boundaries. It is so much better than most things can ever be in reality. I mean, pink elephants and purple tigers? Sign me up.

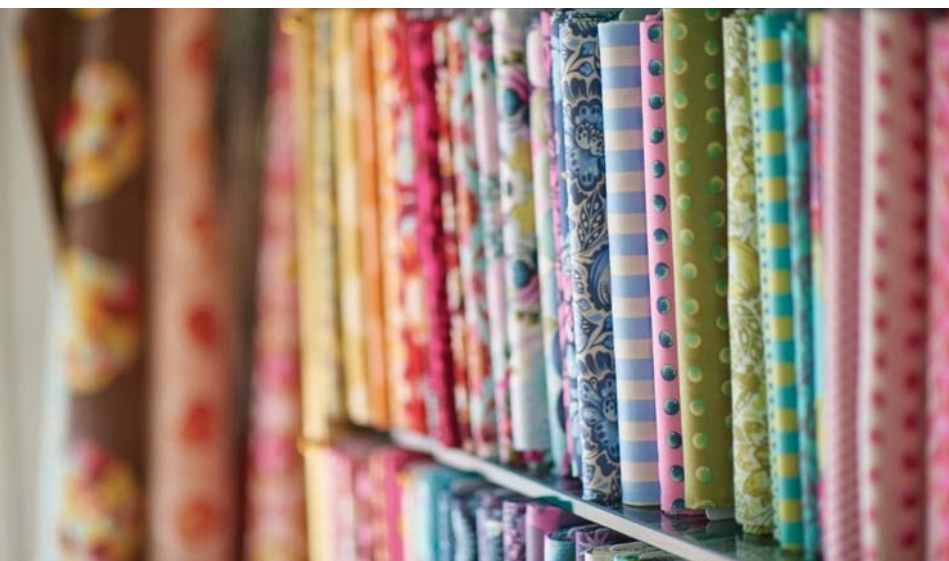
Q: What destinations are you hoping to explore beyond your armchair someday?

A: I travel so much for trade shows, lectures and the business side of what I do that getting on an airplane for fun has really lost its appeal to me. I have been to many countries. I have seen a lot of places and things, so for now I'm quite fulfilled on that front. I only have so much time before I die, and I have more ideas than I'll ever be able to execute in this lifetime. My goal is to make as much as possible in the

time that I have, so heaven for me is studio time without boundaries. I make for a living, and I make to relax from making a living. That doesn't leave me a lot of time.

Q: You're making a video series about the making of "Eden." What's it like telling the story of bringing fabric to life on camera?

A: The questions that I get asked the most are always about my inspiration and how I design fabric. It's such a natural part of my daily life that it's so hard to separate that out into a simple answer. When I was approached about doing a video series, it seemed like the obvious focus was to show that process rather than try to explain it. I'm a really private person. No one is allowed in my studio when I'm working, so it's taken some pretty serious adapting on my part, but I really want to be honest about how it all works, how I work and all of the little things that go into creating a fabric collection. I think it will also be surprising for people to see that designing the fabrics is one small step in the greater business of being a fabric designer. There's so much more to it, from marketing and promotion to samples, patterns, books and traveling, product development and market booths. I would say that the actual "designing" of the fabric collection is the easiest or, at least the most enjoyable part. 



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+ Watch for the Tula's House Video Series

little *Monsters*

BY KRISTA TRACY

Stitch a set of spooky in-the-hoop puzzles to give as Halloween-party gifts.



BOO

Find the Boo
Bones Alphabet
design collection
to embellish a bag for holding the
puzzle pieces at shopsewitall.com.



Download the in-the-hoop Pumpkin design free until Oct. 31, 2015.

Purchase the Pumpkin design at shopsewitall.com after the expiration date.



pumpkin

MATERIALS

- + Two 6" squares of orange felt
- + 3" square of purple felt
- + Scrap of green felt
- + Lightweight cut-away stabilizer
- + Temporary spray adhesive (See "Sources.")
- + Embroidery thread
- + Pinking shears
- + Sharp, fine-tip snips (See "Sources.")
- + Painter's tape

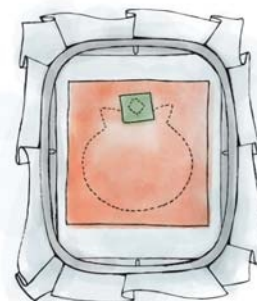
EMBROIDER

- Download the Pumpkin design from cmemag.com/freebies. Load the design onto the machine. Hoop a piece of stabilizer.
- Spray the wrong side of one orange felt square with temporary spray ad-

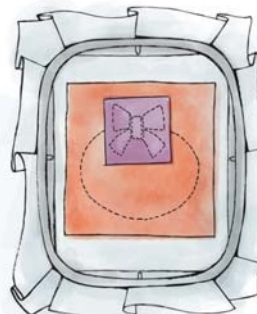
hesive. Center the square in the hoop. Place the hoop onto the machine.

- Thread the machine needle and bobbin with orange thread. Place the hoop onto the machine. Embroider the design outline.
- Thread the machine needle and bobbin with green thread. Center the green felt scrap over the pumpkin upper edge over the bow outline stitches. Embroider the stem outline **(A)**. Remove the hoop from the machine, but don't remove the project from the hoop. Trim the green felt just beyond the design stitches.
- Thread the machine needle and bobbin with purple thread. Re-place the hoop onto the machine. Center the purple square over the bow outline. Embroider the bow stitches **(B)**. Remove the hoop from the machine,

A



B




**FIND the
Frankenstein,
Vampire and
Werewolf** puzzle
designs at
shopsewitall.com.



but don't remove the project from the hoop. Trim the purple felt just beyond the design stitches, making sure not to cut the green felt stem.

- Thread the machine needle with black thread and bobbin with orange thread. Re-place the hoop on to the machine. Embroider the pumpkin face.
- Remove the hoop from the machine but don't remove the project from the hoop. Turn the hoop to the wrong side. Center the remaining felt square over the design; secure using painter's tape. Re-place the hoop onto the machine.
- Thread the machine needle and bobbin with orange thread. Embroider the design outline to attach the felt backing.
- Thread the machine needle and bobbin with green thread. Embroider the stem outline.
- Thread the machine needle and bobbin with purple thread. Embroider the bow stitches.
- Thread the machine needle and bobbin with orange thread. Embroider the remaining design.
- Remove the hoop from the machine and the project from the hoop. Using pinking shears, cut away the

excess felt and stabilizer just beyond the design perimeter. Using sharp fine-tip snips, carefully cut the puzzle pieces apart between the puzzle stitching lines. 

SOURCES

Shop Sew it All carries Sulky KK2000 temporary spray adhesive & Karen Kay Buckley's Perfect scissors: shopsewitall.com.

DESIGNS

Designs created by Krista Tracy.

Download the Pumpkin design free from cmemag.com/freebies until Oct. 31, 2015.

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sulky
Express Yourself



Unique Technique: ITH Welt Pockets

BY RAMONA BAIRD

In the ready-to-wear manufacturing process, welt pockets are crisp and perfect because a machine performs every step. Recreate that precision using an embroidery machine for flawless welt pockets every time.

WELT POCKETS

Breaking down the steps needed to create a welt pocket, and then digitizing those steps into an embroidery file, takes the guesswork out of the welt pocket process. The fabric alignment, cutting of the opening, placing and stitching the welts are all completed in the hoop.

MATERIALS

- + Pattern with a welt pocket
- + Fabric (amount according to pattern envelope plus scraps for testing)
- + Digitizing software
- + Thread: coordinating embroidery & bobbin
- + Cut-away mesh stabilizer
- + Seam gauge
- + Removable fabric pen
- + Fusible tricot-knit interfacing (amount according to pattern envelope)
- + Fabric glue stick
- + Wooden skewer (optional)
- + Small-tip iron (optional)

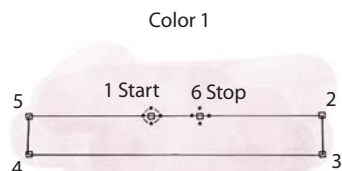
Tip

If available, install a single-hole throat plate. The smaller hole facilitates cleaner, more accurate stitches.

DIGITIZE

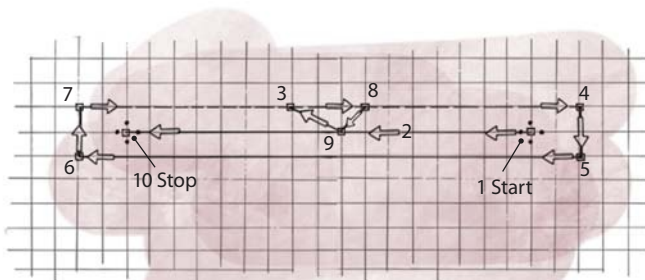
- The final digitized design looks like a simple rectangle. Each step is created in a different color to create stops that allow manipulation of the welts for the following steps.
- Using a seam gauge, measure the pocket opening dimensions on the pattern; record.
- In digitizing software, select a hoop large enough to accommodate the welt, and set a 1/4" grid size.
- Turn off the function that automatically creates tie in/off stitches to remove bulk created by the extra stitches.
- Set the stitch length to 1.5mm to 2mm, depending on the fabric.
- To begin digitizing, use the icon in the software that creates an open-ended object.
- Color 1: Digitize the placement outline 1mm to 2mm smaller on each side than the pocket opening dimensions. This alignment guide is used to position the fabric on the stabilizer. When digitizing the last point, overlap it about six stitches past the beginning and just to the inside of the previous line **(A)**.
- Color 2: Beginning at the pocket lengthwise centerline, digitize the pocket-opening perimeter, using the gridlines to maintain straight, accurate lines. Beginning at the centerline allows the first few stitches to catch the fabric and eliminates bulk around the edge. Path to the outer rectangle and work around the perimeter, overlapping the first few stitches, then path back into the center and digitize to the other end of the centerline **(B)**.
- The next steps in stitching the welt pockets don't require any digitizing; cutting the pocket open, turning the pocket lining, pressing and placing the welts behind the pocket opening.

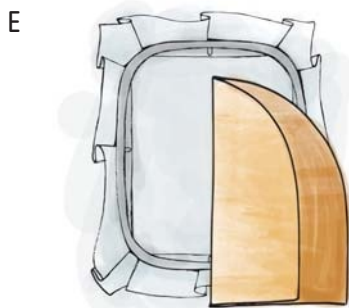
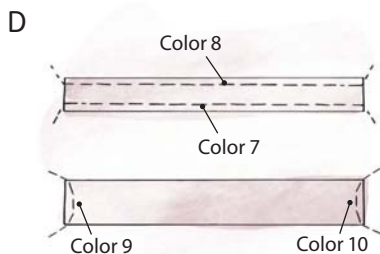
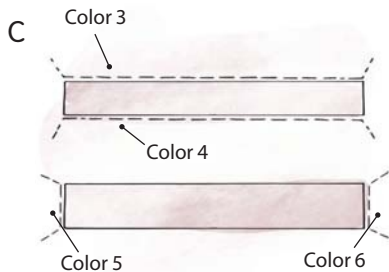
A



B

Color 2





- Colors 3 and 4: For the welt basting stitches, change the stitch length to 2.5mm. Digitize these stitching lines just outside the pocket-opening rectangle. Digitize the upper basting line, and then the lower basting line, adding stitches at the corners.

- Colors 5 and 6: Digitize the left and right basting lines, each as a separate color **(C)**.

- Change the stitch length to 1.5mm to 1.8mm for colors 7 to 10.

- Color 7: Digitize the lower stitching line just inside the pocket-opening rectangle, shaped to travel into a corner and out of the rectangle.

- After this line is stitched, the pocket fabric is folded into place so that the remaining stitches hold the pocket lining in place.

- Color 8: Digitize the upper stitching line in the same manner.

- Colors 9 and 10: Digitize the left and right stitching lines separately, creating a slight arc within the pocket opening **(D)**. When stitched, the sides will appear square rather than bowed as they sometimes do when stitched in the traditional manner.

- Save the file in the correct format and export it for test-stitching.

- Test-stitch the design and make any necessary edits in the software before

stitching the final project. If this file is used for different fabrics, edits may be necessary due to the turn of the cloth and fabric thickness.


EMBROIDER

- Create and interface the welts using lightweight fusible tricot as indicated in the pattern instructions; unfold the welts.
- With right sides together, align the welts; baste the center foldline. Refold each welt along the foldlines; press.
- Slow the machine speed so the fabric can be carefully controlled during each step. Use a wooden skewer to hold the fabric while stitching, if needed. The project fabric isn't hooped, so it can be manipulated between steps.
- Follow the pattern instructions to prepare the fabric, interfacing the project-fabric wrong side at the pocket placement area. Mark the pocket-opening rectangle on the fabric wrong side.
- Follow the pattern instructions to prepare the pocket lining, interfacing the areas indicated on the pattern and marking the pocket opening.
- Hoop one layer of cut-away mesh. This stabilizer is lightweight but strong and won't add bulk to the pocket area.
- Thread the needle and bobbin with embroidery thread to match the

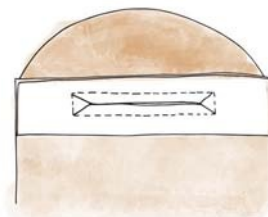


Create your own welt pocket in the desired size to add to any project.

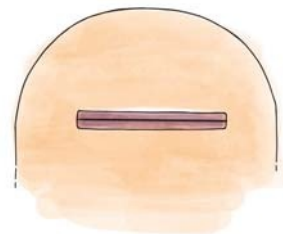
fabric. Embroidery thread is slightly thinner than sewing thread, so the result is beautifully stitched without excess bulk.

- Stitch Color 1 onto the stabilizer; remove the hoop from the machine and place it on a flat surface.
 - Center the project fabric right side up over the stabilizer, aligning the marked pocket rectangle with the placement stitches. Use a fabric glue stick to adhere the fabric to the stabilizer along the pocket opening **(E)**.
 - With right sides together, center the pocket lining over the project fabric, aligning the pocket markings **(F)**.
 - Place the hoop onto the machine and stitch Color 2 (the pocket outline).
 - Remove the hoop from the machine but don't remove the fabric from the hoop. Carefully cut the pocket opening along the stitched centerline and into the corners, making V-shapes at each line end **(G)**.
 - Push the lining toward the wrong side through the opening. Carefully press the opening with a small iron, making the edges as flat and crisp as possible.
 - Center the prepared welts behind the pocket opening; glue into place within the seam allowances. Place the hoop back onto the machine **(H)**.
- Stitch Colors 3 through 6 to attach the welts to the pocket opening, folding the project fabric away from the stitching area for each step **(I)**. Ensure the pocket lining remains flat against the machine underneath the hoop.
 - Flip the project-fabric lower edge up again and stitch Color 7 to create the pocket lower seam.
 - Remove the hoop from the machine, but don't remove the fabric from the hoop. Turn the hoop wrong side up and fold the lining in half, aligning the sides and the pocket-lining upper edge with the welt upper edge. Glue within the seam allowances or pin to secure **(J)**. Place the hoop back onto the machine, ensuring the pocket lining remains flat.
 - Stitch Colors 8 through 10 to secure the pocket upper edge and sides, folding the fabric away from the stitching area for each step.
 - Remove the fabric from the hoop and cut away the excess stabilizer and pocket fabric; be careful not to cut the project fabrics.
 - Finish the pocket lining and the project following the pattern instructions. Remove the basting stitches between the welts. 

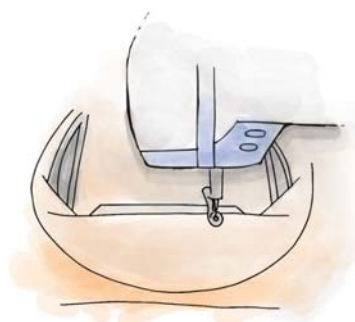
G



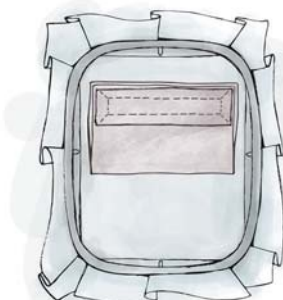
H



I



J





beyond basic *Buttonholes*

BY PATTIE OTTO

Take a jacket beyond ordinary with elegant embroidery and perfectly embroidered buttonholes.

Great Copy #2545
Barcelona Jacket

MATERIALS

- + Oversize blazer or jacket pattern (such as Great Copy #2545 Barcelona Jacket)
- + Linen, linen blend or fabric recommended by pattern (amount according to size plus ¼ yard)
- + Lining & contrasting fabric (for facings & pockets; optional)
- + Button(s) & interfacing according to pattern envelope
- + Thread: construction, contrasting rayon embroidery & lightweight bobbin
- + Temporary spray adhesive
- + Stabilizers: mediumweight cut-away & paper-release water-soluble adhesive
- + Needles: 80/12 universal & 80/12 embroidery
- + Removable fabric marker or chalk
- + Press cloth
- + Embroidery designs: geometric half circle or octagon with open center or center fill removed & buttonhole

PREPARE

- Cut out the jacket left front, jacket back, sleeves, pockets and facings according to the pattern, leaving the remaining fabric for the right front. (The right jacket front is cut out after embroidery is complete.)
- Trace the right jacket front on the remaining fabric, transferring the

center-front line. Pin-mark the center-front corner (or desired embellished button edge) **(A)**.

- Load the desired embroidery design into the machine.
- Hoop a piece of cut-away stabilizer.
- Thread the machine with embroidery thread in the needle and lightweight thread in the bobbin.

EMBROIDER

The featured design fits into a 6"x10" hoop and was digitized specifically for the featured jacket. If using a different design and jacket pattern, print a design template and audition it over the jacket-pattern front pieces to determine the desired design size and placement around one or each buttonhole. Once the desired size and placement is achieved, mark the design center cross marks on the fabric right side, and then follow the embroidery instructions below.

- Place the hoop onto the machine and embroider the placement stitching on the stabilizer.
- Remove the hoop from the machine. Spray the stabilizer generously with temporary spray adhesive.
- Fold the right jacket-front fabric along the center-front placement stitching line with right sides together. Place the fabric over the hooped stabilizer, aligning the fold with the stabilizer center-front marks and the pin mark with the front-point placement stitches **(B)**. Unfold the fabric and finger-press to the stabilizer. Remove the pin.

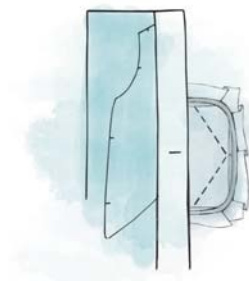
Tip

If using a large button, hand stitch the button directly to the uncut buttonhole and attach large snaps to the facings behind the button and buttonhole to prevent it from distorting and the fabric from sagging.

A



B



- Re-place the hoop onto the machine; embroider the design. Remove the hoop from the machine and the fabric from the hoop. Trim the stabilizer close to the stitching on the fabric wrong side. Press from the wrong side using a press cloth.

CONSTRUCT

- Cut out the right-front jacket, aligning the center-front pattern and fabric placement stitching. Con-

Tip

Find a coordinating embroidery design to embellish jacket collars or cuffs to tie the look together.

struct the jacket following the pattern guidesheet, embroidering the needed buttonholes for a professional finish.

EMBROIDERED BUTTONHOLES

Many embroidery machines offer buttonhole designs in embroidery mode. Decorative buttonholes are also available. Always embroider buttonholes after the garment is constructed.

- Prep the finished jacket by securing the facing to prevent it from shifting. Bring the right-front facing to the jacket right side, turning it wrong side out. On a protected surface and covering the jacket front with paper towels or newspaper, lightly spray the facing wrong side with temporary spray adhesive **(C)**. Fold the facing toward the wrong side; finger-press the layers together. Or baste around the buttonhole area.
- Download a buttonhole design in the desired size at cmemag.com/freebies.



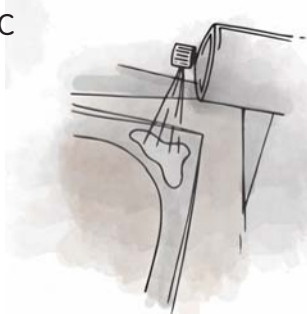
Print a template of the design, and then tape or pin it in place $\frac{3}{8}$ " to $\frac{5}{8}$ " from the finished jacket edge.

EMBROIDER

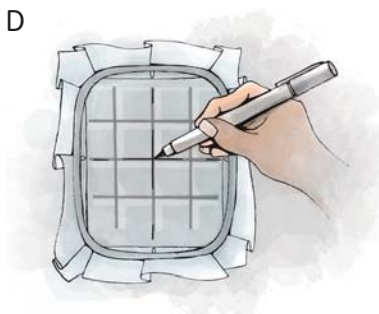
- Thread the needle and bobbin with matching construction thread, contrasting construction thread or contrasting embroidery thread.
- Hoop a piece of paper-release water-soluble adhesive stabilizer with the

paper side facing up. Score the paper inside the hoop, and then remove the paper inside the hoop perimeter. Mark the hoop horizontal axis using a hoop guide or template and removable fabric marker **(D)**. With the buttonhole template centered in the hoop and aligning the horizontal mark with the hoop marks, place the jacket front onto the sticky stabilizer and finger-press to adhere **(E)**.

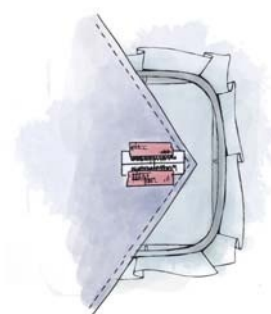
C



D




E



Tip

Embroider several buttonholes in different sizes for a unique embellishment option.

- Place the hoop onto the machine. If needed, use the machine screen to rotate the design to the template center. Remove the template. Use the baste-in-the-hoop function, if applicable, to further secure the jacket to the stabilizer.
- Embroider the buttonhole. Remove the hoop from the machine and the stabilizer from the hoop. Trim the stabilizer close to the stitching on the fabric wrong side. Remove the excess stabilizer using a damp cloth, under running water or by washing.
- Carefully cut open the buttonhole, using a buttonhole cutter if possible, and then hand stitch the button to the left-front jacket.
- Repeat to stitch each buttonhole as desired or required by the pattern. 

DESIGNS

Jacket design: Great Copy Patterns, Barcelona Collection; greatcopy.com

Buttonholes: Download the featured buttonhole design in five sizes for free at cmemag.com/freebies until Oct. 31, 2015.

SOURCES

Great Copy Patterns provided the #2545 Barcelona Jacket pattern: greatcopy.com.

RNK Distributing carries Floriani Wet and Gone water-soluble stabilizer: rnkdistributing.com.

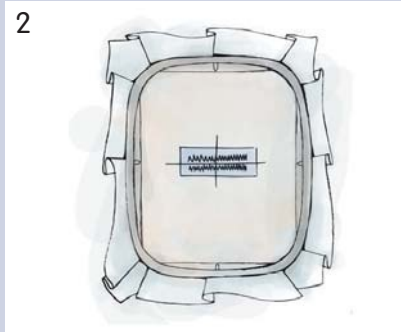
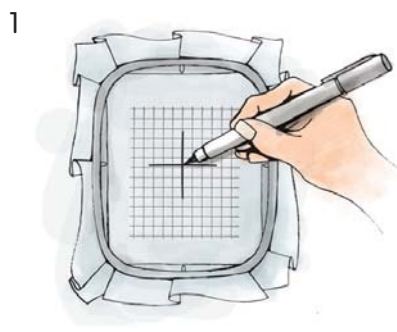



BUTTONHOLE TEMPLATE

Templates are essential for accurate placement of designs—including buttonholes. A printed template is ideal and is quickly produced using embroidery software. If printing a template isn't possible, create a stitched template.

- Hoop a piece of mediumweight cut-away stabilizer. Mark the hoop center cross marks using a hoop guide or template and removable fabric marker (1). Remove the hoop guide.

- Open the buttonhole design on the machine and leave the design centered. Place the hoop onto the machine; embroider the buttonhole (2).
- Remove from the hoop from the machine. Trim the stabilizer close to the stitching on the fabric wrong side. Use the stitched template the same as a paper template to achieve accurate buttonhole placement.





Dress up a simple silk top by
embroidering a continuous
lace border that highlights
the hemline.

endless *Embellishments*

BY CHERYL STRANGES

KWIK SEW 3895,
View B (modified)

MATERIALS

- + Pullover tunic or blouse pattern (such as Kwik Sew 3895)
- + Silk doupioni fabric & notions (according to pattern envelope)
- + Lightweight water-soluble stabilizer (See “Sources.”)
- + Size 80/12 microfiber needle
- + Thread: cotton embroidery, matching 60-wt. bobbin & all-purpose (See “Sources.”)
- + Hand sewing needle
- + Continuous embroidery hoop (optional; see “Sources.”)
- + Embroidery software (optional; see “Sources.”)
- + Bi-level topstitching foot (optional)
- + Endless lace embroidery design

GET STARTED

- Cut out the blouse pattern pieces from the fabric following the pattern guidesheet. Serge- or zigzag-finish the raw edges except for the neckline binding strip.
- Construct the blouse following the pattern guidesheet. Measure the blouse lower edge. Add 1” to the measurement to account for the lace to overlap at one side seam; record. This is the length needed for the finished lace. To determine how many

design repetitions are needed to achieve the length, divide the lower-edge length by the design length. Round up to the highest whole number.

EMBROIDER

- Cut two pieces of lightweight water-soluble stabilizer several inches longer than the finished lace length. Hoop the two stabilizer layers in a continuous hoop following the manufacturer’s instructions. The continuous hoop allows you to move the stabilizer as you embroider to create an uninterrupted strip.
- Load the design onto the machine. Thread the needle with cotton em-

Tip Avoid causing permanent pinholes in silk doupioni by using fabric weights or fine pins to secure the layers during cutting. During construction, pin only within the seam allowances.

broidery thread and the bobbin with matching bobbin thread.

- Place the hoop onto the machine. Embroider the first design segment, and then follow the hoop and design manufacturer’s instructions to reposition



the stabilizer for the next segment. Most endless designs include a placement jump thread that indicates the point at which to correctly align the next segment. Continue embroidering the required number of design segments.

- Remove the hoop from the machine and the stabilizer from the hoop.
- Dissolve the stabilizer according to the manufacturer's instructions. Hang the lace to dry.
- If not using a continuous hoop, embroider each lace segment individually on water-soluble stabilizer. Use embroidery software to copy and paste multiple segments on one workspace to reduce the number of rehoopings needed. After dissolv-

ing the stabilizer, abut the segment short edges. Stitch the abutted ends together using a narrow zigzag stitch and matching thread.

CONSTRUCT

- If needed, trim one lace end so the strip is 1" longer than the blouse lower-edge measurement.
- With right sides facing up, position the lace along the blouse lower edge, aligning the trimmed end $\frac{1}{2}$ " beyond one side seam. Lap the lace straight upper edge $\frac{1}{4}$ " over the blouse lower edge; **(A)**. Lap the finished lace short end $\frac{1}{2}$ " over the trimmed end; pin.
- Edgestitch the lace upper edge through all layers **(B)**. If possible, use a bi-level topstitching foot to keep the fabric and lace layers perfectly aligned.
- Dry-clean the blouse after completion to avoid distorting the lace. ⓘ

Tip When working with silk doupioni or any other fabric with a sheen, cut each pattern piece in the same direction so the light reflects consistently.

DESIGN

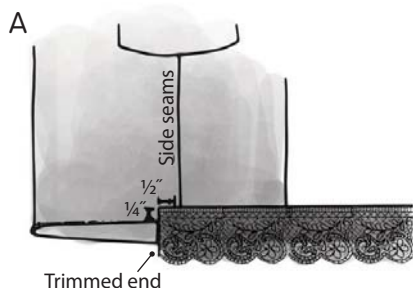
Pfaff, Endless Vintage Cotton Lace #424: pfaffusa.com

SOURCES

The McCall Pattern Co. provided the Kwik Sew pattern: kwiksew.mccall.com.

Pfaff provided the Creative Sensation machine, Endless Hoop, Coverlock 4.0 serger, embroidery software, Inspira Whisper Web Mesh stabilizer and needles, and Robison Anton embroidery thread: pfaffusa.com.

Tip Use this lace technique to lengthen the hemline of a skirt or pair of capris that are too short. Or embellish the lower edge of curtains for a feminine touch.



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Q&A *by Pamela Cox*



Dear Pamela,

There are so many products available on the market advertised as "must needs" for machine embroidery. How do I decide on the best stabilizer and other notions?

*Signed,
What to Buy*

DEAR WHAT TO BUY,

Although there are many embroidery supplies and notions available, the one common consideration to be given to any product must be, "Is this supply of the highest quality?" You're investing your thoughts, creativity, time and talent into a project, so the end result should stand the test of time. Proven products may cost a few pennies more than other products, but their high standards in manufacturing make the purchase well worth it.

Education also removes some of the mystery from choosing which supplies are truly necessary, particularly when it comes to stabilizer, thread and needles. Reading articles like this one is a good start. However, a hands-on class provides a chance to listen to an instructor's thoughts, use their recommend supplies (usually found in the class kit), and potentially learn a new method of completing a specific technique. Often times in machine embroidery, there's more than one way to achieve the same goal.

STABILIZER

For necessary supplies, stabilizer, along with the fabric, is the foundation of any embroidery design. Although there appears to be an overabundance of different products on the market, once broken down into specific types, the differences begin to make sense.

- **Tear-away:** Tear-away stabilizer gently tears from the design perimeter.
- **Wash-away:** Wash-away stabilizer disintegrates over a period of time from repeated washing.
- **Cut-away:** Cut-away stabilizer must be trimmed from the design perimeter.

As with most things in life, there are advantages for each stabilizer type, off-set by what some might consider disadvantages. For instance, while easily torn from the wrong side of a fairly dense design, tear-away stabilizer often tears during the hooping process or can distort delicate designs.

The other factor contributing to the seemingly never-ending abundance of stabilizers is that each type of stabilizer is often offered in a variety of weights. Is it a must to have both a 2.5oz and a 3.3oz cut-away stabilizer, for example? Probably not. The heavier stabilizer would normally be used under heavier-weight fabric, but remember, the heavier-weight fabric itself offers additional support to the design.

“Specialty” stabilizers are also available for unusual fabrics and/or certain techniques.

- **Self-adhesive stabilizers:** A protective cover peels away to reveal a sticky surface. This stabilizer is useful when a fabric should not or cannot be hooped directly, such as velvet and leather. It’s also a valuable aid when an area on a ready-made garment is difficult to hoop, such as a collar or a cuff.

- **Topper stabilizers:** This stabilizing “film” is sometimes used to “sandwich” the fabric and the foundation stabilizer. Toppers are useful when stitching on napped fabrics, such as terry cloth, velvet or suede, or for additional stability on stretchy or knit fabrics. The purpose is two-fold: providing extra stability, especially for knits, and allowing the embroidery thread to “sit” on top of the fabric nap instead of sinking in, making details more visible.

There are two types of topper stabilizers. Wash-away topper stabilizer can easily be torn from the stitched design, but since it does wash away over time, the benefit of supporting a design so it sits above the nap may disappear. Heat-away topper stabilizer remains intact (dryers don’t get hot enough to disintegrate the film), providing contin-

ual support for the design. The tradeoff is that it needs to be cut away from the design perimeter.

- **Water-soluble stabilizers:**

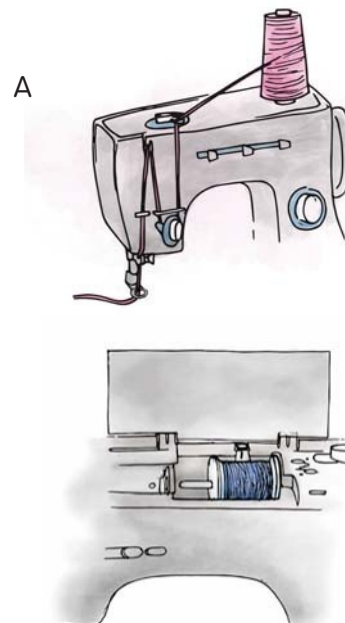
Water-soluble stabilizer (not to be confused with wash-away foundation stabilizers) is fabricated to dissolve completely when immersed in water. This stabilizer is most often used for freestanding lace embroidery. Although advertised to “dissolve completely,” oftentimes a residue remains no matter how often the item is soaked or rinsed. On wet lace, the residue seems more like a glue, which tends to create a starched effect when dried. This effect might be welcome for projects such as a bookmark, bowl or a table runner, but less desirable in a lace accent for clothing.

THREAD

Thread is also a huge investment for home machine embroiderers, so first decide what type of machine embroidery is of most interest. If it’s delicate designs or writing, 60-wt. thread is the best thread choice and a full collection might be a wise investment.

Thread weight is another important consideration. Weight refers to how fine or coarse the filament is; the higher the number, the finer the thread. Each thread type has its own benefits, and some requirements, for successful machine embroidery:

- **Metallic:** Metallic thread is composed of man-made or synthetic filaments for a sparkle effect, making it a popular choice for holidays. However, this thread requires a specialty needle and reduces the speed of the machine by half.
- **Cotton:** Cotton thread is a natural fiber filament, which, because of



its heavier-weight and matte finish, lends itself to more of a hand-embroidered look. With cotton thread, it’s important to slow down the machine speed and use a needle with a large eye. Clean the machine after a project and often during the project since cotton threads produce lint during the stitching process.

- **Rayon:** Also a synthetic fiber, rayon thread is the most popular machine embroidery thread. Characterized by an ability to reflect light, the silky effect of rayon is much desired. It’s also popular for ease of use. With proper needle size, there’s little thread breakage. Be aware that the darker the color, the more likely it is to fray, due to the dyeing requisites.

Keep in mind that spool design—or how the thread feeds off the spool—may also be a factor worth considering. Different machines support different threading systems. One spool style might feed into the machine better than another, producing less thrown stitches. Conventional spools seem to work best on horizontal threading machines while the cone design seems to work equally as well on vertical threading systems (A).

NEEDLES

If stabilizers provide a solid foundation and thread type/weight expresses creativity, then machine needles are the catalyst that allows fabric, stabilizer, thread and embroidery to successfully unite.

Friction is thread's worst enemy. If the thread keeps breaking, there's a reason for it, and oftentimes the solution may be a combination of things. However, the most common problem is friction.

Friction is defined as "the rubbing of two objects against each other when one or both are moving." To cover a designated area within a design stitched on an embroidery machine, the machine needle penetrates the fabric many times, often in close proximity, at high speeds. Friction occurs each time the needle penetrates the fabric to deliver the thread. Although

friction cannot be avoided, it can, to some degree, be controlled. Using the proper needle size in relationship to the fabric and thread weight is key to producing beautiful embroidery. Also consider slowing the machine speed down to reduce friction, or using professionally digitized designs to gain full coverage without unnecessary extra threads and beginning each project with a sharp, new needle to easily penetrate the fabric. When selecting the proper machine needle, it's helpful not only to understand the relationship of thread weight to fabric content but also the physical characteristics that differentiate various needle types.

- **Universal needles:** The name implies that this needle type is appropriate for all sewing. Considering the wide range of sizes available, a universal needle accommodates about any fabric, but it may not be the proper choice for the specific techniques.
- **Ballpoint needles:** This needle has a rounded point, which is a better choice for stitching on knit fabrics **(B)**. The rounded tip doesn't cut through the links of knitted fabric but instead slides between them, preventing damage to the fabric.
- **Embroidery needles:** An embroidery needle features a larger eye (area in which the thread passes through during the stitching process) than a regular sewing machine needle **(C)**. Larger eyes reduce friction as the thread rubs against the metal needle. Embroidery needles can be found both with sharp or rounded points.
- **Metallic thread needles:** This needle supports an even larger opening for the thread to pass through than an embroidery needle.



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The extra space helps prevent breakage or shredding common with this sensitive thread type.

- **Topstitch needles:** Designed with a large eye at the needle point, topstitch needles reduce friction as several layers of fabric are penetrated with each needle puncture.

Since there's no downside to using a sharp needle with a large needle eye, a topstitch needle can be used for many sewing and embroidery functions, provided the right size is available for the fabric. Although there are many other types of machine needles available—including specialty needles, such as twin-needles for pin-tucks or decorative stitching, quilting, leather (although if embroidering on leather, a leather needle must be used with special embroidery designs), wing-needle for heirloom techniques, etc.—using topstitch needles can simplify things.

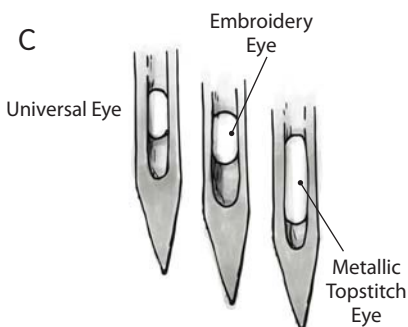
KEEPING NOTES

Consider keeping a small diary on sewing habits to learn as you go. Title the project and list the fabric, thread, stabilizer and needle used. If embroidery is involved, note the designer and possibly where the design was purchased. It doesn't have to be a detailed summary. However, quick notes about what worked or what didn't, and why the project didn't turn out the way you'd hoped, will be a valuable reference when beginning new projects.

B



C



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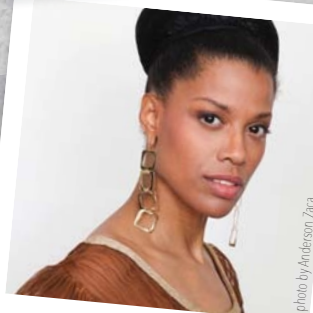
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ALL-STARS SEASON 4



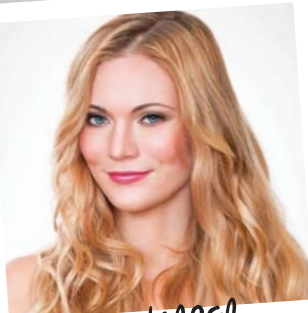
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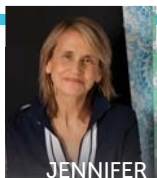


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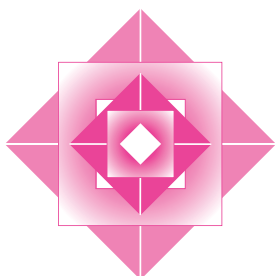
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